

Remarks

Claims 1-34 are pending. Claims 1-34 stand rejected.

Claims 1-34 stand rejected under 35 USC 103(a) over US Patent 5,600,648 (Furata) in view of US Patent 5,416,768 (Jahromi). Applicants have amended claims 1, 11, 22, and 29 to further clarify limitations not taught or suggested in Furata and/or Jahromi. Amended claim 1 recites a first adapter assembly adapted to combine the secondary overhead into the unused space of the primary overhead and form a transport overhead from the secondary overhead and the primary overhead wherein the transport overhead includes the secondary section overhead. When a section of the secondary ring is disabled between the first adapter assembly and the second adapter assembly, amended claim 1 advantageously routes the traffic on the secondary ring over the primary ring without losing the secondary ring's section overhead.

Both Furata and Jaromi do not teach or suggest forming a transport overhead that includes secondary section overhead and transporting the transport overhead over the primary SONET ring. Furata teaches extraction of the Path Overhead of a virtual container from a hierarchy of virtual containers for verification to facilitate maintenance and inspection. One problem in Furata is the addition of section overhead does not preserve the secondary overhead in the primary SONET ring (col. 5, lines 20-24). Jahromi teaches a cross-connect device for two optical ring networks that maintains path continuity. The problem in Jahromi is the section overhead is generated for one direction and terminated for the reverse directions, which loses the original section overhead (col. 5, lines 37-53). Also, the rings in Jahromi are only connected at one add/drop multiplexer. Thus, when a section of one ring is disabled, the traffic cannot be routed through the other ring to avoid the disabled section. Amended claim 1 advantageously preserves secondary section overhead when a section of the secondary SONET ring is disabled and the traffic of the secondary ring is routed over the primary ring. Thus, independent claim 1 now includes features that are neither taught nor suggested by any of the cited references. Therefore, claims 2-34 are allowable for the same reasons as claim 1.

Please feel free to call me to discuss rejection or allowance of claims 1-34.

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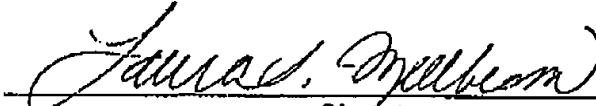
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